

**Sports  
Illustrated**

**PRO**  
**FOOTBALL**

**game rules & play book**

*Comments and Diagrams:* Edited by Weeb Ewbank

# SPORTS ILLUSTRATED PRO FOOTBALL

## Game Rules

Running the first series of plays will convince you that **Sports Illustrated Pro Football** is the most realistic and easy to play professional football game ever devised. Months of research and complex computer formulas have been replaced by an easy-to-follow color coded design that leads to straight forward fun and excitement.

Included with the game rules are diagrams and comments on all Offensive Plays and Defensive Formations appearing in the game. Edited by New York Jets Coach Weeb Ewbank, these diagrams and comments provide an informative guide for those unfamiliar with the tactics and strategies that go into professional football.

**Equipment:** The game includes a Football Field; Offensive, Defensive, and Special Team Charts for each of the 26 pro teams; 12 pegs; 5 dice (2 white, 1 black, 1 red, and 1 green); a Football; and a Yards-To-Go Indicator.

## PRE-GAME PREPARATION

**Game Set-Up:** Position the football field so that each player faces an End Zone. Place the pegs in their appropriate holes: 2 in the Quarter Clock (at "15" minutes and "0" seconds), 4 in the Scoreboard, 1 in the Down Indicator, 1 in the Quarter Indicator, and 2 in the Time Outs Remaining Indicator.

Each player uses one peg to select his plays.

Each player chooses a pro football team and the Play Chart for that team (Offense is on one side, Defense is on the other). He also takes the booklet containing the Special Team Chart for his team (teams are grouped according to actual pro divisions).

Each player has the option to read the analysis of his opponent's Offense and Defense (on the bottom of the Play Charts) in developing a game plan.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

**Use of the Game Charts:** Each team has its own chart (Offensive and Defensive) and a booklet containing its Special Team Chart. Except for the use of the Special Team Charts (for Kickoffs, Punts, etc.), the game is basically a sequence of selecting a play, rolling the dice to see the result of the play, and then *comparing the individual Offensive and Defensive results on a third chart which shows the final result of what the play will be*. This third chart, located on the board, is called the *Priority Chart*. Following is the sequence of play and use of each chart:

**Offensive Play Charts:** After the kickoff and return is completed, the player on Offense selects one of the nine plays on his Offensive Play Chart and records this play by placing a peg in the corresponding number on his Offensive Play Selector on the board, making certain to use his Play Chart to shield his selection from his opponent.

The player on Offense then throws his special dice (1 black, 2 white) and reads the result as follows: The number on the black die as the first digit of the number and the sum of both white dice as the second digit of the number. **Example:** If the black die shows a "3" and one white die shows a "4" and the other white die shows a "5" then the final number is "39".

The player then locates this final number under the #ON DICE Column on his Offensive Play Chart.

The player then reads across this number until he reaches the box under the column of the Offensive play he chose. The number in this box indicates the result of the Offensive play. A *green* box shows the number of yards *gained by the Offense*. A *red* box shows the number of yards *lost by the Offense*.

**Example:** The Atlanta Falcons Coach chooses an End Run for his play and on the roll of the dice throws the number 31. *The Offensive play result* is the number 7 in a green box (*green* meaning the *Offensive* team *gains* yardage).

**Defensive Play Charts:** At the same time the player on Offense selects a play and rolls his dice, the player on Defense follows a similar procedure. The player on Defense selects one of the six Defensive formations on his Defensive Chart and records this formation by placing a peg in the corresponding letter on his Defensive Play Selector on the board, making certain to use his Play Chart to shield his selection from his opponent.

The player on Defense throws his special dice (1 red, 1 green) and *adds* the two numbers. This final number can be a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. He locates this number under the #ON DICE Column next to the Defensive formation he chose and reads *across* this number until he reaches the box under the column of the play chosen by the *Offensive* player. The number in this intersecting box indicates the result of the Defensive play. A *red* box means the *Offense loses* yardage. A *green* box means the *Offense gains* yardage.

**Example:** The Baltimore Colts Coach selects a Partial Blitz Defensive Formation and on the roll of the dice throws the number 3. If the Offensive coach selected an End Run, then the Defensive play result is the number 4 in a red box (*red* meaning the *Offensive* team *loses* yardage).

**Priority Chart:** After both teams have the results of their plays, they consult the Priority Chart (on the board) to see whether: (1) the Offense wins out over the Defense (2) the Defense wins out over the Offense or (3) the Defensive result and the Offensive result are combined to form the final



result of the play (such as when the *Offense* shows *gained* yardage (*green*) while the Defense shows that the *Offense* *lost* yardage (*red*).

To determine this final result, the player on Offense locates his result on the left side of the Priority Chart and reads across until he reaches the box under the column showing the Defensive play result. The intersecting box indicates the final result or "priority."

**Example:** Atlanta's Offense shows a green box with the number 7 and Baltimore's Defense shows a red box with the number 4. The box where both results meet shows "ADD" which means to combine both results (red and green). When this is done, the +7 from the Offensive Chart combined with the -4 from the Defensive Chart shows the play result is that the *Offense* (Atlanta) *gained* 3 yards on the play.

**Other Examples:** If the Offensive Play Chart shows *green* (3 yards) and the Defensive Play Chart shows *green* (5 yards) the result is +8 for the *Offense*. If the Offensive Play Chart shows *red* (2 yards) and the Defensive Play Chart shows *red* (3 yards), the result is -5 for the *Offense*.

**Chart Legend:** The Chart Legend, next to the Priority Chart on the board, explains the meaning of each color and symbol on the Priority Chart and on all the other charts used in the game.

**Special Team Charts:** (Throw the same dice used to obtain Offensive play result). When using the Special Team Chart, the results are never compared on the Priority Chart. Each result is used as it appears.

**Example:** If the Kicking Team uses the KICKOFF Column on its Special Team Chart, the Receiving Team then uses the KICKOFF RETURN Column on its Special Team Chart.

**Point After Touchdown:** This column with an explanation is located on the board. Use the same dice used to obtain an Offensive play result. A Point After Touchdown is a *1 point play*.

**Offensive-Defensive Play Sequence:** (If a penalty occurs, see page 6 of the rules.)

1. *Choice of Kickoff* — Each player throws a white die. The player who rolls the higher number has the option to receive or to kickoff. At the start of the second half the player who lost the initial option chooses to kickoff or receive.
2. *Kickoffs* — The team kicking off places the ball on its 40-yard line and uses the KICKOFF Column on its Special Team Chart. Move the ball the distance it was kicked.
3. *Kickoff Return* — The Receiving Team, if running the ball back, uses the KICKOFF RETURN Column on its Special Team Chart. (If the ball is kicked into or beyond the End Zone, see Special Situations section.)

4. *After the Kickoff* — The first series of downs begins and both players select a play and record it on their Play Selectors.

**Notes:** The **SIDELINE PASS** Column on the Offensive Play Chart cannot be used until the last two minutes of each half.

The **LONG PASS** Column cannot be used *inside* the Defensive team's 15-yard line.

The **MEDIUM PASS** Column cannot be used *inside* the Defensive team's 5-yard line.

5. Both players announce their plays
  6. Both players roll their special dice and find the results on their respective Offensive and Defensive Play Charts.
  7. Compare the Offensive and Defensive results on the Priority Chart and mark off the final play result.
  8. Record the time of each play on the *Quarter Clock* on the board. There are 15 minutes to a quarter. Use 1 peg to record the seconds and the other peg to record the minutes. A chart showing the time every play takes is located next to the Quarter Clock.
- No matter how much time remains in a quarter, the last play is allowed to be completed. Neither the half nor the game can end with a penalty. If time has run out and the last play is a penalty and it is accepted, another play is allowed.**
9. Advance the peg in the Down Indicator.

**Time Outs:** During each half, each team may call three Time Outs. Unlike Pro Football, Time Outs do not stop the clock. For the purpose of this game, a Time Out is used to reduce a 30 second play to a 10 second play. Time Outs are called *after* the result of a play is known. A Time Out would therefore *not* be called after a 10 second play.

## SPECIAL SITUATIONS

**Kickoffs Into the End Zone:** If the ball is kicked *into* the End Zone, the Receiving Team must choose whether to take the ball on its own 20-yard line or to attempt a return. If a return is attempted, the Receiving Team uses the KICKOFF RETURN Column on its Special Team Chart, making certain to include the End Zone as part of the return yardage.

**Touchbacks:** The End Zone measures 10 yards. If a ball is kicked *beyond* the End Zone, it must be placed on the 20-yard line where the next series of plays start.

**Punts:** To Punt, follow the procedure used for Kickoffs, except that the Kicking Team must use the PUNT Column on its Special Team Chart. If the Punt can be returned, the Receiving Team uses the PUNT RETURN Column on its Special Team Chart.

**Safeties:** Whenever a Safety occurs (trapping the Offensive Team in its End Zone), the Defensive Team gets 2 points, and the team on Offense kicks off from its 20-yard line, using the KICKOFF Column on its Special Team Chart.

**Fumbles:** All Fumbles, unless otherwise indicated by a plus (+) or a minus (-), take place at the line of scrimmage. When a Fumble occurs, the Offensive team uses the *Fumble Recovered By:* line on the bottom of its Special Team Chart. The Offensive player throws the dice and sees if the range of numbers gives possession of the ball to him or to the Defense.

**Blocked Kick:** If a Blocked Kick occurs when a team kicks on a 4th down, the ball is automatically turned over to the Receiving Team at the point where the ball landed. If a Blocked Kick occurs on *other than a 4th down*, the Kicking Team uses the *Fumble Recovered By:* line on the bottom of its Special Team Chart to determine who recovered the ball (use same method used for fumbles).

If a Blocked Punt results on any down and the ball ends up in the Offensive team's End Zone, use the FUMBLE RECOVERED BY: line to determine the result of the play.

If the Offensive team recovers this Blocked Punt, it is charged with a Safety. If the Defensive team recovers this Blocked Punt, it scores a Touchdown.

**Note:** A Blocked Kick is considered a Completed Play (30 seconds elapse on the Quarter Time Clock).

**Field Goals:** (3 point play) Every team has a maximum distance, *from the line of scrimmage*, that it may attempt a Field Goal. These maximums are shown on the bottom of the team's Special Team Chart in the line "Maximum Field Goal Distance." When attempting a Field Goal, use the numbers in the FIELD GOAL Column to indicate the distance, *from the line of scrimmage*, that the ball traveled and went through the uprights.

**Example:** If a Field Goal is attempted from the 30-yard line and the number located in the FIELD GOAL Column is 30, the ball traveled 30 yards and went through the uprights for a Field Goal.

If the Field Goal is short and therefore no good, add 15 yards onto the kick.

If the additional 15 yards result in the ball being kicked into or beyond the End Zone, *it is an automatic Touchback* and the ball is taken back to the 20-yard line.

If with the additional 15 yards, the ball still falls short of the Goal Line, the Defensive Team must use the KICKOFF RETURN Column on its Special Team Chart.



If "NG" is the result shown on the Special Team Chart, it is an automatic Touchback.

## PENALTIES

**Offensive-Defensive Penalties:** Whenever a penalty occurs, the Offensive Team rolls the dice again and completes the play. If, on the roll of the dice to complete the play, another penalty is incurred and charged to the same team, *the player continues to roll the dice until a play other than a penalty results*. The team not penalized may then choose to either accept the *greater* penalty (which does not advance the Down) or to accept the play.

If a penalty is charged to *both* teams on the *same* play, the penalties, regardless of the size of each penalty, *offset* each other, and the entire play does not count, except for the elapsed time which is added onto the Quarter Time Clock.

*Penalties can result in a first down but not in a touchdown or a safety.* All 15-yard *Defensive* penalties, if accepted, result in an automatic first down.

If a penalty occurs within 15 yards of the Goal Line *and is greater than the distance remaining to the Goal Line*, the penalty, if accepted, is marked off at half the distance to the Goal Line.

If this distance is a fraction ( $\frac{1}{2}$ -yard), move the ball to the next yard marker going toward the Goal Line.

If the penalty occurs *outside* the 15-yard line and *extends* within the 15-yard line, the penalty is reduced to half the distance after going *inside* the 15-yard line.

**Example:** A 15-yard penalty occurring on the 22-yard line puts the ball on the 11-yard line (7 yards from the 22-yard line puts the ball on the 15-yard line; half of the remaining 8 yards then puts the ball on the 11-yard line).

*A pass interference penalty can never result in a touchdown.* If the penalty occurs in the End Zone, place the ball in play on the 1-yard line, with an automatic first down and goal to go.

*Any pass interference penalty—no matter the distance—results in a first down.*

**Penalties on Kickoffs:** For the purpose of penalties, consider the Kicking Team the Offensive Team and the Receiving Team the Defensive Team. If the Kicking Team commits a penalty on the kickoff, the penalty is marked off from the 40-yard line and the *kick is taken over again*. Additional penalties would continue to move the ball back and the kickoff taken again.

If a penalty occurs on the Kickoff Return, the Receiving Team again uses the KICKOFF RETURN Column on its Special Team Chart, and after measuring off the return, adds or subtracts the penalty yardage. Then, from where the ball is placed, 10 yards are needed to complete a first down. Neither team has the option of declining a penalty on a Punt, a Kickoff, or an Interception Return.

**Penalties on Point After Touchdown:** If a penalty results against the *Defensive Team*, roll the dice again. If the P.A.T. is good, mark off the penalty yardage before the ensuing kickoff.

If there is a penalty against the *Offensive Team*, and the Defensive Team accepts the penalty, the Offensive Team must use its FIELD GOAL Column to attempt the conversion. Since the P.A.T. is originally attempted from the 2-yard line, a 15-yard Offensive penalty means that the ball has to travel 17 yards from the line of scrimmage for the 1 point conversion.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all regular professional football rules apply in this game.



### ON-SIDE KICKOFF COLUMN

# ON DICE	DISTANCE OF KICK	RECOVERED BY
10	22	Kicking Team
11	4	Receiving Team
12	5	Receiving Team
13	6	Receiving Team
14	7	Receiving Team
15	8	Receiving Team
16	9	Receiving Team
17	30	Receiving Team
18	35	Receiving Team
19	33	Receiving Team
20	27	Receiving Team
21	20	Receiving Team
22	17	Receiving Team
23	14	Receiving Team
24	13	Receiving Team
25	12	Receiving Team
26	16	Receiving Team
27	19	Receiving Team
28	25	Receiving Team
29	22	Receiving Team
30	18	Receiving Team
31	15	Receiving Team
32	11	Receiving Team
33	10	Receiving Team
34	5-yard Offensive Penalty	
35	5-yard Offensive Penalty	
36	15	Kicking Team
37	12	Kicking Team
38	18	Kicking Team
39	20	Kicking Team

**On-side Kickoff:** If a team wants to attempt an On-side Kickoff (to retain possession of the ball), the **ON-SIDE KICKOFF COLUMN** is used. Throw the same dice as used for finding an Offensive result.

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Comments and Diagrams Edited by Weeb Ewbank

On the following pages are illustrations of the nine offensive plays and six defensive formations used in this game.

Note: There are many variations to each of the plays illustrated. For purposes of these diagrams, all offensive formations are from the "Standard T", and all defensive formations are from the "Standard 4-3-4".

## legend

offense..... Indicated on diagrams by ○

T..... Tackle  
G..... Guard  
C..... Center  
TE..... Tight End  
WR..... All split receivers, flankers,  
or wide receivers  
QB..... Quarterback  
FB..... Fullback  
HB..... Halfback

defense..... Indicated on diagrams by □

T..... Tackle  
E..... End  
LB..... Linebacker  
MLB..... Middle linebacker  
CB..... Cornerback  
S..... Safety



Movement of ball carrier



Movement of offense



Movement of defense

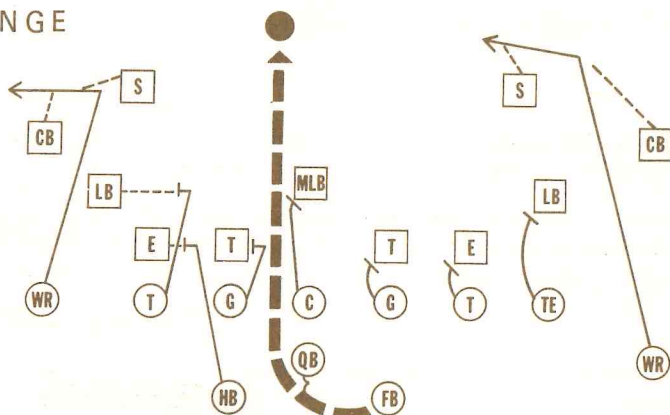


Movement at other than full speed



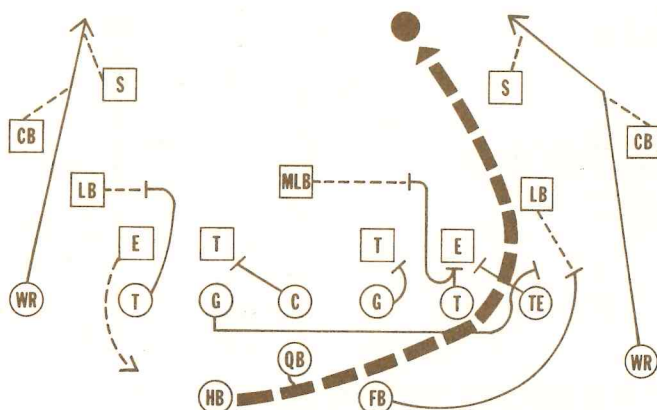
Direction of block

## LINE PLUNGE



The **line plunge** is one of the most standard power plays in football. The aim of the ball carrier is to gain needed short yardage. On the snap, all linemen block to open a quick hole. The halfback goes into the line to block the right end. Both wide receivers go down, hoping to draw the defensive secondary with them. The fullback takes the hand-off and runs through the hole between center and left guard.

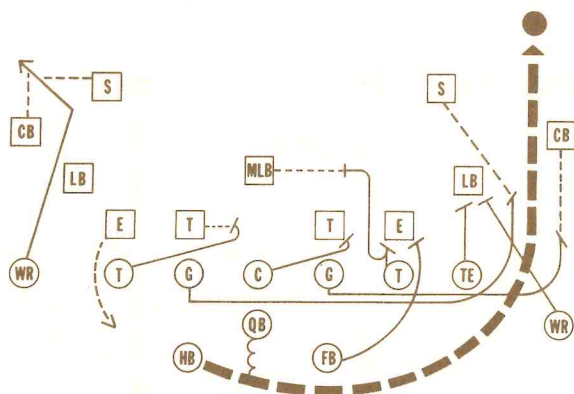
## OFF TACKLE



The **off tackle** is another of Professional Football's power plays. To execute this play, the offense must effectively block out the opposition's strong-side linebacker, the strong-side end, and the middle linebacker. One of the most important blocking assignments in this play involves the fullback and the left guard who must double team the strong-side linebacker. The right tackle blocks the strong-side end and moves over to block out the middle-linebacker, while the tight end comes in and picks up the block on the strong-side end.

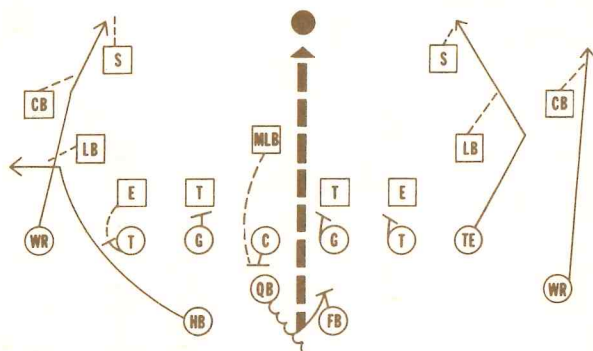


## END RUN



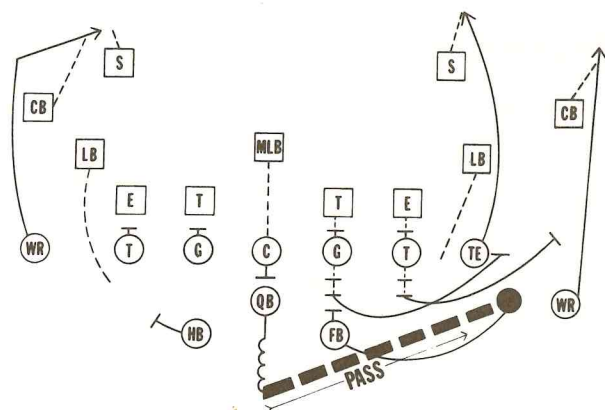
The **end run** is used for keeping the defense from keying in on power rushes. On the snap, the quarterback spins and hands-off to the halfback, then fakes a pass. Both guards pull out to lead interference. The right guard blocks out the strong-side cornerback. The left guard blocks out the strong-side safety. The strong-side linebacker receives double teaming from both the tight end and wide receiver. The right tackle stops forward progress of the left end and moves on through to block out the middle linebacker. The fullback comes in to pick up the block on the left end. The center and left tackle block out the defensive tackles left open by the pulling guards.

## DRAW



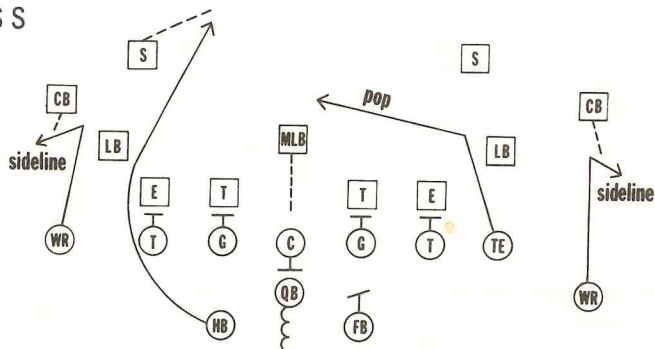
The **draw** play is a tactical necessity for a pass conscious offense that results in cooling off the rush and keeping the defense "honest." Execution of the draw requires good faking and finesse to give the impression of a pass. All receivers go deep, forcing the secondary to cover, and the halfback moves into the flat, taking the linebacker with him. The line sets up in a pass blocking formation. The quarterback drops back and fakes the pass drawing a pass rush from the defense. The fullback moves up as if to block and takes the ball from the quarterback. All defensive linemen are attacking the passer. After a slight delay, the fullback runs for the open hole.

## SCREEN PASS



The **screen pass** is used to counter the over eagerness of the defensive line to rush in and dump the quarterback. All wide receivers go deep taking as many of the secondary with them as possible. The left tackle and left guard block like a pass. The quarterback drops back as if to pass long and looks left, then drifts back about two more yards. The right guard and right tackle protect like a pass, but permit penetration, then release their men and move out to set up the screen for the fullback who faked the pass block and ran to the right to receive the pass.

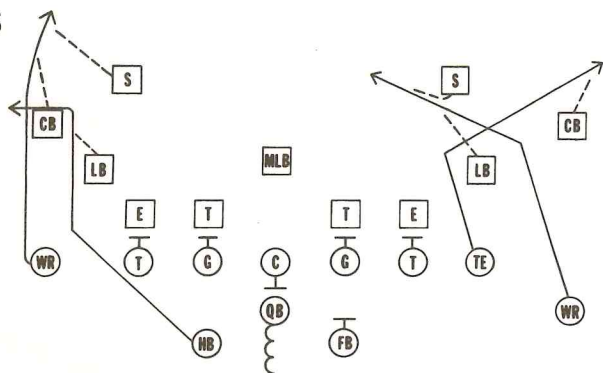
## SHORT PASS



The **short pass** is used for quick gain and for ball control. The offense hopes to get single coverage for all possible receivers (two wide receivers or tight end). The wide receivers go down-and-out toward the sideline hoping to draw the defensive secondary deep and then come back near the sideline. The halfback flares deep hoping to engage the weak-side linebacker and safety. Either receiver can be used as the primary target, depending on which receiver is open. In the above diagram the pop and sideline passes are two examples of the short pass.

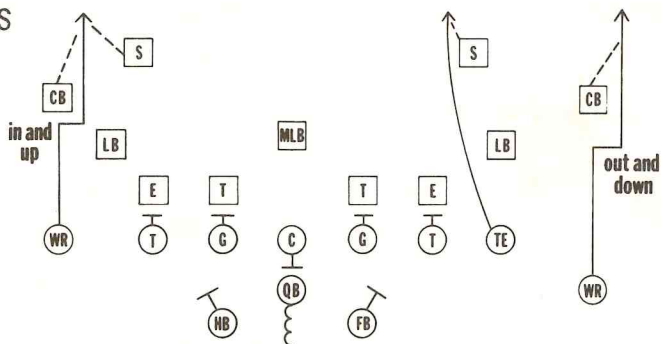
For the purpose of this game, a short pass is usually attempted for less than 10 yards.

## MEDIUM PASS



For the purpose of this game, the **medium pass** is any pass attempted for 10–20 yards. This pass is used to mix strategy on early downs, to get necessary yardage on any down, or to confuse the defensive secondary by using various patterns (as illustrated above) — crossing receivers or driving one deep to clear out an area and run the other receiver into the open area.

## LONG PASS



For purposes of this game, a **long pass** is any pass attempted over 20 yards. It is used to surprise the defense on 2nd or 3rd down and short yardage (2nd & 1 or 3rd & 1), or to make up needed long yardage (3rd & 25), or used sometimes for a long gain when backed up in their own territory.

## SIDE-LINE PASS

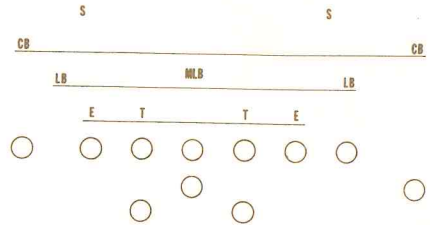
For purposes of this game, the **side-line pass** is only used when two minutes remain in each half. In Professional Football, this pass stops the clock, but for this game any side-line pass (attempting to go out of bounds) completed which *does* go out of bounds reduces a thirty second play to a ten second play.



## DEFENSES

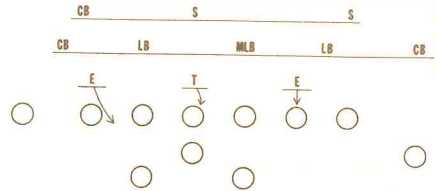
### **Standard 4-3-4**

The 4-3-4 is the most common defense used in Professional Football. It features the ability of the three linebackers to go in any direction. The linebackers can move into the line for a running play or drop back for coverage on a passing play.



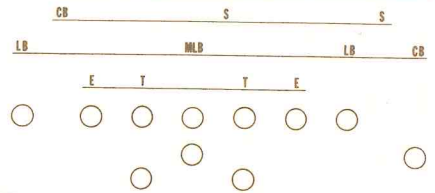
### **Pass Prevent 3-5-3**

For extra coverage on the pass play, usually an extra defensive back who is quick and agile is used in place of one of the front four. All of the secondary stay deep to prevent the long scoring pass.



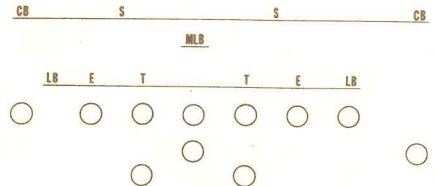
### **Double Coverage 4-4-3**

The double coverage 4-4-3 is used to defend against the sweep or flat pass, with men rotated up on the line at either the weak-side or strong-side, so that all outside men are covered. The three defensive backs are playing in a zone.



### **Short Yardage 6-1-4 or 7-1-3**

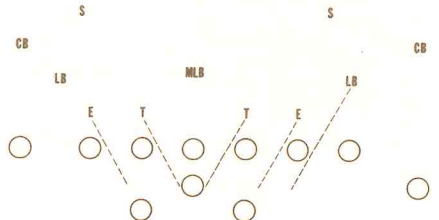
The aim of the short yardage 6-1-4 defensive formation is to prevent short running gains. There are usually four defensive backs on the field. All defensive players are playing up close. To create the "Goal Line" defense 7-1-3, an extra lineman moves onto the line with only three defensive backs on the field.



### **Blitz**

The blitz, either partial or full, is used when the defense suspects a passing situation. The **partial blitz**, illustrated here, uses one linebacker and the four linemen to rush the quarterback. For a **full blitz**, all three linebackers plus the four linemen rush the quarterback. The blitz, if successful, results in dumping the quarterback.

The problem with this defense, however, is that if the blitz is unsuccessful, the secondary is left vulnerable to many passes. The screen or a pitchout may go all the way.



This game was devised by Information Concepts Incorporated in cooperation with Special Projects Department of SPORTS ILLUSTRATED. Editorial Consultant Mort Sharnik, Associate Editor, Sports Illustrated.

*SPORTS ILLUSTRATED invites all inquiries and comments about the game. Please write to:*

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